



Copper River Regional Health Network

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October 23, 2010

Nancy Merriman
Health Facilities Program Manager
Denali Commission
510 L Street, Suite 410
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Ms. Merriman,

CRRHN Health Needs Survey Project

Under the guidance of Dr. Garcia and Ms. Lacasse from the University of Alaska, the CRRHN Health Needs Survey reached local residents mail boxes in March 2010. The surveys were mailed to 2,570 resident households. UAA Graduate Student, Ms. Jennifer Lacasse has been retrieving the completed surveys from the post office box and entering in the data in the PASW Statistics Grad Pack 18 software package to compile the results.

Dr. Garcia and Ms. Lacasse presented the preliminary results of the survey during the July 13th, 2010 network meeting. The initial response to the mailed survey was 302 households; this return rate was lower than the network participants desired. Interestingly enough the majority of the surveys were completed by middle age, college educated women with a substantial income, which does not represent the overall region. A power point presentation of the initial data is available upon request. The CRRHN participants agreed to extend the collection period of the initial survey into the fall. The participants also requested that Dr. Garcia and Ms. Lacasse compile a condensed version of the survey for distribution during the health fair and community events. The condensed survey was presented to the CRRHN Participants and widely distributed to segments of the population that had been missed in the earlier mailed version in July. Measures were taken to reduce duplication when and wherever possible. As of October, the last of the surveys have been turned in for assessment. It is anticipated that at least another 100 household surveys were gathered. Dr. Garcia and Ms. Lacasse are currently in the process of compiling the data and will plan to present the final results at a special meeting in December.

It is important to note that the initial funding request budgeted for two surveys to be completed. The CRRHN Participants elected to improve the collection rate of the first survey rather than conduct a follow up survey due to time limitations and a desire to reach a wider expanse of the regional population. It was felt that this would allow for more accurate and useful data to be presented in the end.

There were many lessons learned by the CRRHN during this process. First, the survey was written and worded in a manner that made it difficult for some residents to understand and complete. The initial survey was also too long and many people elected not to complete it when they saw the length and complexity of the document. By condensing the survey questions and having known community members hand the surveys out personally, the collection rate increased substantially. Initially it was anticipated that the printing and postage costs would be more cost effective by utilizing the university printing services. In the end this was not the case and the overall printing and cost of mailing the initial survey was substantially more expensive than anticipated. Initially the CRRHN participants decided to have the surveys returned to a PO Box in Anchorage where the graduate student could collect them. It was felt that this aided in a non biased gathering method and that residents did not have to fear someone locally reading their information as well. In the end many residents thought the survey was being done by an entity outside of the region because of the mailing address. In the future the CRRHN participants discussed additional local promotion of the survey and local collection sites.

CRRHN Informational Website Project

The website www.crrhn.org has been renewed through May of 2011. The website offers readers an update on network activities, links documents produced by the CRRHN in pdf format, as well as links to several other valuable studies, and a list of CRRHN participants along with their contact information. The CRRHN Coordinator also maintains a Facebook page for the network.

Coordination of the CRRHN and Administrative Services

The coordination and administrative portion of the grant project is on schedule and within budget. The CRRHN coordinator has been successful in coordinating several special and committee meetings and dictating meeting notes for the network from July through September, 2010. In June 2010 an issue of concern arose between two key participants of the CRRHN. The Coordinator spent an extensive amount of time communicating with all involved parties and assisted in the planning of two joint meetings with a mediator. Two successful mediations were held, the Denali Commission Award funds were expended to cover the cost of the mediator. The following was the public statement released after the first mediation: *"We met as a group and an open respectful conversation was conducted. We made a plan to move forward, with focus on communication, education and meeting the health needs of all the residents of the Copper River Region."* The second mediation built on the first and was crucial as both of the primary organizations involved had new CEO's or Administrators as of the second meeting. This roundtable style mediated session allowed all involved to move forward in a more open communicative manner. Several of the participants have expressed how instrumental these meetings were in creating a positive forward motion for the region and the CRRHN participants. It was unanimously agreed by the CRRHN Participants present at the special meeting to continue to work together through the CRRHN and improve health care for all residents in a cooperative manner. In response to this cooperative spirit the CRRHN is in the process of applying for the HRSA Rural Health Network Development Program Grant in November. This grant will allow the CRRHN to formalize the organization, develop a business plan and to aid all network partners in the development of their own business plans in manner that meets this cooperative spirit.

CRRHN Activity Summary

July 2010

- Bi Monthly CRRHN Meeting - Second Tuesday of the month from 11:00am - 4:00pm.
- Meet with UAA Graduate Student and Professor – Survey Project Progress.
- Complete narrative report for Denali Commission Award.
- Update CRRHN Website and CRRHN Facebook page.
- Maintain a communication flow for network participants through e-mail, telephone and personal contact.
- Monthly contact with MSTC staff.

August 2010

- Complete and disperse minutes from the July 2010 CRRHN Meeting.
- Special Meeting August 25, 2010 – Conflict Resolution Mediation CRMC – CRNA
- Contact with UAA Graduate Student and Professor – Survey Project Progress.
- Update CRRHN Website and CRRHN Facebook page.
- Maintain a communication flow for network participants through e-mail, telephone and personal contact.
- Monthly contact with MSTC staff.

September 2010

- Bi Monthly CRRHN Meeting - Second Tuesday of the month from 11:00am - 2:00pm.
- Meet with UAA Graduate Student and Professor – Survey Project Progress.
- Update CRRHN Website and CRRHN Facebook page.
- Maintain a communication flow for network participants through e-mail, telephone and personal contact.
- Monthly contact with MSTC staff.
- Began application process for the HRSA Rural Health Network Development Program Grant.

The CRRHN sincerely thanks the Denali Commission for your support of our network. The continued growth and expansion of participants in the CRRHN is a great indicator of how successful our region wide network has become. Please feel free to contact me with any comments, questions or for further information.

Sincerely,



Kris Winter, Coordinator
Copper River Regional Health Network